

City of Springfield
Animal Issues Task Force
Recommendation # 1
Animal Shelter

Purpose: The Animal Issues Task Force recommends that strategies be put in place to replace the existing animal shelter which is located at 4002 N. Farmer Road. Replacement of this facility should be completed as soon as possible.

Rationale: The existing facility is inadequate to meet the needs of this community. Animal Control and Welfare activities are considered a core public safety activity and are typically the responsibility of local government. We have the dual responsibility of protecting people from animals as well as protecting animals from people. Our current facility severely limits our ability to provide the appropriate level of care that our animals deserve and that our community expects. The current facility is no longer adequate for the following reasons:

- ***The facility is undersized*** – the current facility has been cobbled together over the course of many years. We are not able to quarantine incoming animals to prevent the spread of zoonotic illness. We do not have enough space to house animals in separate kennels or cages.
- ***The facility is difficult to find*** – the current facility is located adjacent to Fulbright Springs and the Police Department firing range. Most citizens do not know where our facility is located and often confuse our facility with the Southwest Missouri Humane Society.
- ***The facility is located in the flood plain*** – the facility has flooded on several occasions and staff has been trapped on both sides of the bridge leading to the location. Fortunately, no animals have been harmed during these flood events.
- ***The current facility does not allow for adoption to occur from the shelter*** – because of the size and design of the current facility, we are unable to facilitate adoptions to the public. Shelter staff has found workarounds by partnering with rescue agencies to place animals in forever homes, but providing adoptions from our facility would provide another piece to the rescue puzzle.
- ***The facility is difficult to clean and maintain*** – technology has progressed significantly on facilities over the course of the last several decades. Better air handling equipment would help with smell issues and disease transmission and appropriate flooring would be easier to clean and maintain.

- ***The facility does not provide outdoor exercise space for animals*** – one significant challenge at the current facility is the lack of exercise space. On occasion, we will hold a dog under court order for an extended period of time. We have no exercise space for such animals and do not have appropriate space to construct one.

Solution: The Animal Issues Task Force would like to recommend that a new facility be built and that the following components be strongly considered:

- ***We should explore the feasibility of a regional shelter*** – animal shelters are expensive and complex facilities to run. Smaller governmental entities struggle with the proper operation of such a facility. Partnerships with other regional governments should be sought out to take advantage of the economies of scale available with such a facility.
- ***The new facility should be located on land already owned by the City of Springfield*** – this will help hold the total project costs down. The Animal Issues Task Force recommends either a central-city location or a location adjacent to the Southwest Waste Water Treatment Plant. The latter is located adjacent to four-lane highway and would provide better visibility to the public.
- ***The new facility should provide for adoptions from the facility*** – Such an approach will take some of the burden from our rescue groups. Additionally, groups such as C.A.R.E., Halfway Home and others could be provided space to facilitate adoptions on-site.
- ***An education program should be developed for pets and pet owners***
- ***Continuation of our partnership with SAAF House*** – we view SAAF House as a critical piece to the local pet population puzzle.
- ***Create a Friends of the Pound group for fund raising and advocacy.***
- ***Support pet foster home placement.***
- ***The goal to make the program self-supporting*** – gold standard programs such as the one found in Calgary, Ontario have developed approaches that have made their programs self-supporting. Removing the reliance of this program on general revenue dollars should be a long-term strategy.
- ***Cremation facility or contract with commercial entity*** – currently, animals that are euthanized are placed in the City's landfill. We would like to explore a city-owned cremation facility or a partnership with an existing facility for such a service. This could potentially serve as a profit center for the facility.

Budget: At this point it is difficult to determine a total budget for such a facility. Much will depend on the number of regional entities that show interest in partnering with the City on such a project. This project has been placed in the City's Capital Improvement Plan at a total

budget of \$2.5 million dollars. The next logical step is to hire a consultant to determine size requirements and budgetary parameters.

Funding source: The appropriate funding source for such a project would be either municipal bonds or revenues through the level property tax.